THE MAYORS' INSTITUTE ON

CITY DESIGN

Design Arts Program, National Endowment for the Arts Fall 1992

Birmingham Dedicates New Civil Rights Park

Mayor Richard Arrington has drawn on Birmingham's history as a segregated city to inspire a Civil Rights District commemorating the freedom fighters and civil rights movement of the 1960s.

On September 15, 1992, twenty-nine years after the bombing attack on the 16th Street Baptist Church which killed four young girls attending Sunday school, Mayor Arrington and the City Council dedicated Kelly Ingram Park, which serves as the centerpiece for the newly established Birmingham Civil Rights District. Hundreds of residents joined political and civil rights leaders at a commemorative breakfast and dedication including a keynote address by Reverend Joseph Lowery, President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

The Birmingham Civil Rights District includes an historic community of black businesses along Fourth Avenue, the 16th Street Baptist Church, the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame and the new Civil Rights Institute, which was dedicated in November.

The Institute, a 58,000 square-foot building designed by MICD resource team alumnus Max Bond, houses archives, administrative offices, public galleries and meeting rooms. The museum part of the building begins with a film about the founding of the city and scenes from its segregated past. Other exhibits examine some of the violent confrontations of the era: Klan attacks on Freedom Riders and police dogs attacking rights marchers.

Mayor Arrington notes that the Kelly Ingram Park, one of Birmingham's three oldest city parks and located in the historic center of black businesses, was "the original point of the massive demonstrations that led to passage of civil rights legislation liberating this nation from the shackles of legal discrimination and segregation." He calls the park "a place of revolution and reconciliation," noting both its historical significance as the site of civil rights marches and its importance as a symbol of healing in a city grappling with its divisive past.

In the quarter century since the civil rights movement, the neighborhood around Kelly Ingram Park had decayed and thinned out as

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Birmingham Mayor Richard Arrington

USCM Talk Addresses Development in 1990s

Last summer at the U. S. Conference of Mayors in Houston, some thirty mayors met to learn about structural changes which have occurred in the real estate market and how these changes will effect development in their cities. Sponsored by the Mayors' Institute on City Design, the meeting featured speaker Michael Buckley, a real estate consultant with Halcyon division of Ernst & Young of Hartford, CT.

The breakfast event was part of an ongoing series of meetings—held in conjunction with the U. S. Conference of Mayors—which have been established in response to requests from mayors who have attended the Mayors' Institute on City Design. Mayor Joseph P. Riley of Charleston, SC, who has been a motivating force behind the Mayors' Institute since its inception in 1986, chaired the meeting and moderated the closing discussion on what specific urban design projects have developed out of the mayors' attending the Institute.

Michael Buckley has professional experience as an architect, professor and real estate advisor and has been a participant with the Institute. His message to the mayors was to rethink the rules which governed real estate development in the boom years of the 1970s and 1980s. Rather, he said, many of the underlying assumptions were being turned upside down in a market which is now dominated by big-scale institutional investors, not the individual developers which were so evident in the recent past.

Such factors as tight money, difficulty in keeping tenants and erosion of real estate values have all contributed to a reordering of the development market and the shift in control from small to large investors.

Buckley predicted that less would be done in cities by private developers as institutional organizations would "grow by involuntary acquisitions through foreclosure and lack of re-financing." Institutional investors

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Savannah Sponsors Urban Design Forum

Several weeks after attending last spring's Institute in Charlottesville, Mayor Susan Weiner contacted the Mayors' Institute on City Design to set up a workshop in Savannah.

Four design professionals came to Savannah in July to discuss the fundamental tenets of good city design and to discuss with citizens of the city their vision for Savannah's future. Citizens were also asked to present their impression of the city's physical needs from the point of view of downtown residents, merchants and preservationists.

The team included Boston architect David Lee; Montgomery, AL, city planner Mike Dobbins; landscape architect Diana Balmori of New Haven, CT; and developer Ed Logue of Boston. The program was moderated by architect Grover Mouton of New Orleans, regional coordinator of MICD: South at Tulane University since 1989.

The panelists urged the involvement of the city in leading the effort and the careful scrutiny of consultants who may recycle old planning documents from other contracts. Logue advocated formulating a comprehensive plan and augmenting the city's planning staff to provide a mechanism of implementing any designs that are proposed. "Otherwise," Logue said, "you will end up with another set of plans for your storage vault." He added that the best chance for completing any ambitious plan is to break it into segments instead of taking on more than the city can afford in terms of financing or political will.

The team also encouraged bringing a broad base of the citizenry into the decision-making process. "The process has to get more inclusive," said David Lee. "You have to broaden the group of shareholders."

Michael Dobbins added that in Birmingham "we don't do much without genuine input from our residents. Community involvement is the base of our city."

Diana Balmori said the city has many assets that should be addressed in any planning effort. These assets can be seen on three different scales, and each should be addressed to enhance the quality of urban design:

• *City-wide systems.* Savannah has a series of systems, particularly transportation, which tie the city together and form the basis of a framework to build and connect with the city. In particular, there is an historic canal system, as well as the railroad lines with their remarkable bridges. The port of Savannah is both the past and future of the city and must be incorporated in any vision for planning in Savannah; so should possible connections to the Atlantic Ocean.

• *The middle landscape.* Noted for its grid of parks and public spaces, Savannah could also be overlaid with a more dynamic set of parks—linear instead of room-like—which can connect parts of the city together as "greenways." Other possibilities for interconnection include a street-level tram, which could stimulate downtown commercial activity as well as tie outlying neighborhoods into the city center.

• *The micro level.* Attention must be paid to the *elements* of the city's landscape to make a successful environment. This means expertise about specific trees and plants that can be grown and maintained to reinforce Savannah's image, and demanding the maintenance of historic buildings and keeping the streetscape attractive.

SAVANNAH TEAM

Diana Balmori
landscape architect

Michael Dobbins
city planner/urban designer

David Lee
architect/urban designer

Edward Logue
developer/attorney

Grover Mouton, Chair
artist/architect

Savannah Mayor Susan Weiner

The workshop attracted a large turnout, thanks in part to strong media coverage. Mayor Weiner believes the program was a success.

"Savannah is very excited about its downtown revitalization efforts; citizens are sending me ideas by the pound! There is an excitement, a desire to participate, and a willingness to make planning a continuous process in Savannah." ■

(MICHAEL BUCKLEY, continued from page 1)

such as pension funds and insurance companies will be attracted to real estate by its low pricing and relatively flat interest rates.

"This re-investment will not follow the unchecked enthusiasm of the past. The real estate industry has an obligation to fulfill the destiny of this country, where real estate will play an important role not only in terms of economic activity, creating jobs and wealth, but also in providing a built environment where the character of the country is formed."

Buckley said that this was where the role of municipal government would come into the new equation: cities can both improve and attract development by preparing for the future with a comprehensive plan, which can be "sold" to real estate investors as a means of guaranteeing a community's long-term integrity.

Institutional investment organizations, by nature conservative, respond positively to order. Planning will bring in "a new, disciplined approach to real estate development." If cities can't present well-conceived and planned proposals for development, they will be passed over for investment elsewhere.

Buckley concluded by saying that these changes can result positively by forcing the municipal leaders to discuss, plan and guide the development in their cities—ultimately building a higher quality of life. ■

MICD: Northeast March 1992

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

RESOURCE TEAM

Alan Brangman
Design Arts Program

Robert Campbell
architectural critic

Paula Collins
real estate developer

Walter Cudnohufsky
landscape architect

Gary Hack
architect/urban designer

Alex Krieger
architect (keynote)

Elizabeth Padjen
architect

Robert Peck
real estate attorney

Mark Schuster
planner/educator

Roy Strickland
architect

Sam Bass Warner
urban historian

MAYORS AND DESIGN PROBLEMS

Mayor Thomas Allen, Portland, ME: Where should the city locate new public venues—a convention center, a train station, an aquarium? How will these interact to reinforce the city's vitality?

Mayor Patricia Bourgoin, Gardiner, ME: How can traffic patterns be changed to improve drive-through economic activity? Development of a streamside park with recreational and commercial uses.

Mayor David Brenner, Oneonta, NY: Design for a new hotel located partially on Main Street. How to handle access to street, parking, and negotiation issues with developer?

Mayor Brenda Elias, Franklin, NH: How can Franklin capture some of the tourist economy in the state's lake district? Which options should be developed—not only for tourists but for residents as well?

Mayor Francis Lanctot, Woonsocket, RI: How can the city reestablish its center among several historic squares? How can the river's role in the city's development be expressed?

Mayor James Sheets, Quincy, MA: Integration of a new subway and a commuter rail station in the town center and its impact on vehicular and pedestrian traffic. What solutions provide the best options for parking and commercial development?

Mayor Kenneth Smith, Bethlehem, PA: Urban design strategies for the center of an historic district where an old commerical street meets a pedestrian mall developed in the 1960s. Should the mall be returned to vehicular traffic? How should further development be planned?

Mayor Jeffrey Wennberg, Rutland, VT: Development of a shopping mall and parking lot facing a row of 19th-century mercantile buildings. How can the new development enhance Rutland's sense of place?

MICD: XII April, 1992

University of Virginia

Joan Abrahamson
urbanist/lawyer

Richard Baron
real estate developer

Alan Brangman
Design Arts Program

Allan Jacobs
city planner

William Lamont
city planner

David Lee
architect/urban designer

Laurie Olin
landscape architect

Genevieve Ray
preservationist/urbanist

Mayor Joseph Riley
Charleston, SC (keynote)

Catherine Ross
planner/transportation

Mark Schimmenti
architect/town planner

Mayor Jerry Abramson, Louisville, KY: Strategies for a corridor through the downtown shopping district that incorporate a convention center, a covered retail gallery and a vacant landmark hotel.

Mayor Alvin Edwards, Charlottesville, VA: How should the community address the street linking the university to downtown? What steps and strategies should be developed to realize the area's potential, both commercially and residentially?

Mayor Gary McCaleb, Abilene, TX: What programs will help the city improve its entrance corridors, a large scale project requiring a significant change in public attitudes? Can Abilene's image be built upon with a linear park developed along the railroad?

Mayor Glenn Mecham, Ogden, UT: How can a comprehensive plan help a city promote pedestrian activity, link activity centers and architectural treasures? Which pieces of the city's fabric should be given priority in planning development?

Mayor Douglas Palmer, Trenton, NJ: What strategies and designs can help a poorly maintained historic canal serve local recreational needs and act as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization? What strategies can be followed to encourage activity along a linear park?

Mayor William Tilney, El Paso, TX: In a city with booming growth and development of individual projects, what is the significance, purpose and ultimate goal of urban design? How can it work in a city driven by expanding economic forces?

Mayor Susan Weiner, Savannah, GA: How can the city improve its old commercial street that has fallen behind as the area around it becomes revitalized. How are issues of land use, leadership and fitting the street into a larger pattern of the city addressed?

MICD: XIII
October 1992

University of Virginia

RESOURCE TEAM

Alan Brangman
Design Arts Program

Terry Brooks
architect/urban designer

Joseph Brown
landscape architect/planner

Paula Collins
developer

Deborah Dalton
landscape architect

Frances Halsband
architect

Alex Krieger
architect/urban designer

Walter Kulash
transportation engineer

Ed Logue
developer/attorney

Mayor Joseph Riley
Charleston, SC (keynote)

Mark Schimmenti
architect/town planner

MAYORS AND DESIGN PROBLEMS

Mayor Elizabeth Brater, Ann Arbor, MI: How can the city identify the best use and design for a vacant hotel building? How should competing community interests for the site be fairly judged?

Mayor Terry Frizzel, Riverside, CA: Using the restored Mission Inn as a focus point, how should the city concentrate and guide development along a downtown corridor with many historic buildings?

Mayor Joseph Ganim, Bridgeport, CT: Can the design of a park reconnect the city to its waterfront, despite rail lines which separate the city from the water? How can a park system tie together a city while providing needed passive recreational venues?

Mayor Mike Johanns, Lincoln, NE: Should a city strive to replace lost retail in the downtown core, or should other uses—such as night–life and public sector employers —be encouraged to promote activity?

Mayor John Logie, Grand Rapids, MI: How will development pressures change the nature of an attractive yet run-down neighborhood? What is the impact and effectiveness of a proposed sports arena, historic district designation and development linkages for the area?

Mayor Robert Markel, Springfield, MA: What strategies can help the city promote its riverfront? How should development focus around existing attractions, and what can the city do to promote the area?

Mayor John Norquist, Milwaukee, WI: An elevated freeway which requires reconstruction separates two downtown segments. Should the freeway come down to grade, or can design improvements reduce the barrier between the historic district and the downtown core?

Mayor Mary Rhodes, Corpus Christi, TX: How can the city best design improvements to an under-developed beachfront neighborhood which has acquired major tourist attractions?

MICD: West
November 1992

University of California, Berkeley

Cheryl Barton
landscape architect/planner

Alan Brangman
Design Arts Program

Robert Conradt
transportation engineer

Allan Jacobs
city planner

Donlyn Lyndon
architect/urban designer

Anne Vernez Moudon
architect/urban designer

Grover E. Mouton, III
architect/urban designer

Roberta Mundie
land use consultant

Deborah Sussman
environmental graphic designer

Gregory Tung
architect/urban designer

Mayor Karen Vialle
Tacoma, WA (keynote)

Mayor Wilburn Brown, Gilbert, AZ: What are the landscape and urban design possibilities for the canals and water reclamation pools in this rapidly growing city? Utilitarian and environmentally informed site provides a unique opportunity for design.

Mayor Bruce Hagensen, Vancouver, WA: How should Vancouver proceed to develop an historic riverside park with multiple ownership, incompatible uses, and competing interpretations of the historically significant sections?

Mayor Linda Crockett Lingle, Maui County, HI: Defining a focus for a coastal strip development where none has ever existed. What are the critical considerations and objectives of traffic improvement and how will different traffic patterns impact development?

Mayor Louis Mentor, Bremerton, WA: Questions of land use and reducing the impact of parking to help revitalize Bremerton's image. How can the city capitalize on its waterfront location to encourage retail activity and capture ferry-based tourism?

Mayor Linda Morton, Lakewood, CO: Issues of strip development, a proposed light-rail corridor, and identifying appropriate uses and improvements to a section of old U.S. Highway 40 running through an historically suburban city.

Mayor Tim Nader, Chula Vista, CA: What will be the impact of a proposed high-rise development located between downtown Chula Vista and the ocean. Can the city demand appropriate development and amenities, or will it have to undertake some projects on its own?

Mayor Michael Sweeney, Hayward, CA: What are important design considerations for redeveloping a warehouse neighborhood situated between a proposed Amtrak station, proposed baseball diamonds and the commercial district. issues included appropriate density, access and transportation corridors, and graphic design.

(BIRMINGHAM, continued from page 1)

desegregation caused a major decline in the black business district. Mayor Arrington demonstrated his administration's determination to renew the area by commissioning the Civil Rights Institute across the street and approving $2 million for park renovations.

"Twenty-nine years ago this part of the city was in turmoil," Arrington said at the park's dedication. "The church had just been bombed. . . . Today, we are here to celebrate some reconciliation."

The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, flanked by the 16th Street Baptist Church (right) and Kelly Ingram Park with sculptures and fountain in the foreground.

When he attended the Mayors' Institute on City Design: South 1990 in New Orleans, Mayor Arrington realized that he had "an opportunity to do something fantastic for the city," according to MICD: South coordinator Grover Mouton of Tulane University.

"It wasn't any specific suggestion made by the resource team at the Institute," Mouton said. Rather, the process of attending the Mayors' Institute and listening to what everyone had to say gave Mayor Arrington the impetus to consider how important the project could be as a vehicle for renewal.

"I left the Mayors' Institute fired up with enthusiasm and excited about some possible solutions to problems that I'd been wrestling with for quite some time," said Mayor Arrington at a recent session of the MICD: South program. "Participation in the Mayors' Institute gave me another management tool and also gave me some confidence about the input into decision making which a mayor always has to do."

After the Mayors' Institute, Mayor Arrington pursued an idea of turning Kelly Ingram Park—the central public area in the Civil Rights District—from a passive landscaped open space into an interpretive park that would provide a thematic focus for the whole part of the city. Eventually, Mayor Arrington pushed for a park that is designed to focus the vistor's attention on the legacy of the civil rights movement—in the Mayor's words, "a place of revolution and reconciliation," which provides an unprogrammed foreground to the Civil Rights Institute and memorializes the historic events that took place there.

Following up the MICD session, Grover Mouton assisted Arrington to develop a concept for the park based on a program of public art. To maintain a more direct experience of the historic events, the mayor insisted that the sculpture they commissioned be representational.

Kelly Ingram Park is a now a carefully arranged scheme of sculptures which commemorate some of the most vivid incidents in the nation's struggle for civil rights: the firehosing of protesters, the attacking of freedom marchers by police dogs and the incarceration of children. A sculpture of a praying minister reinforces the non-violence espoused by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who led marchers in Birmingham during the 1960s.

According to Mike Dobbins, the planning director for the City of Birmingham, the Civil Rights Institute and District has been a long-term project since the late 1970s when the previous mayor convened a committee to study possibilities for the district. Mayor Arrington has been a critical mover in the realization of those initial ideas, Dobbins said. "This is a process that simply would not have happened if it weren't for him."

For Dobbins, the value of attending the Mayors' Institute was to make the mayor "more conscious of the role that design plays in the city" and to other options which exist for planning from a design perspective. With his heightened design consciousness, Mayor Arrington has worked to promote and bring about big improvements in the city, Dobbins said.

Besides the Civil Rights Institute and Kelly Ingram Park, Mayor Arrington and Mike Dobbins have worked together to create an urban agenda for the city that has included the rethinking of freeway entrances to the city and how to use spaces underneath them, the improvement of a derelict park between important civic institutions, and the establishment of physical links to the urban downtown core.

Dobbins doesn't underestimate the importance of having a mayor who is willing to make a priority to support good design. He believes that by working incrementally over time, the Mayor has made very significant improvements to the city.

"He's presided over the transformation of the quality of the urban environment in Birmingham." ■

Abilene Mayor Offers Ten Commandments for City Design

Mayor Gary McCaleb of Abilene, Texas, attending MICD: 12 in Charlottesville last spring, compiled the following list of urban design "commandments" based on the recommendations of the resource team chaired by Allan Jacobs:

1. Thou shalt never give away a public street.
2. Thou shalt never widen a street.
3. Thou shalt (almost) never build a building higher than five or six stories.
4. No matter what the stage at which thou art presently becoming involved in planning and design—thou shalt become involved earlier.
5. Thou shalt not allow buildings to usurp space, rather thou shalt use buildings to arrange space.
6. Thou shalt remember that urban design begins by asking, "How does this place work?" not "How much will it cost?"
7. Thou shalt not copy another city, but remember that the best design solutions are inherently, locally rooted.
8. Thou shalt work to create some "attractive congestion."
9. In addition to the advice you receive from consultants, designers, and well-meaning citizens thou shalt not forget to consult your own intuition and common sense.
10. Thou shalt not give the people an aquarium, when it is more important to give them a sense of pride in their own community.

ALUMNI NOTES

Mayor Dan Kelleher (MICD: West 1991) and the city council have approved new zoning and development standards, including design guidelines, for **Kent, WA**.

The mayor's staff has worked with Anne Vernez Moudon's urban design class at the University of Washington. The class found impediments to developing active neighborhoods in the city's own zoning code, which allows commercial development to spread in large, undeveloped areas not in close proximity to residential areas.

"Their ideas and concepts will be very useful to our efforts to develop flexible design standards for new development in the downtown," says Mayor Kelleher.

Mayor Cardell Cooper (MICD: Northeast, 1990) is promoting Plaza Village Project, an open space planning concept and model for improvements that can be made to Main Street in **East Orange, NJ**.

The mayor's staff has been forming public-private partnerships that provide input and finances. The project incorporates urban design standards and streetscaping with infrastructure improvements, entrepreneurial opportunities and community services.

The city is also working on an adaptive reuse project to restore the East Orange railroad station.

In November, **Mayor Dirk Kempthorne** (MICD Spring 1989) was elected to the United States Senate. Credited with giving downtown **Boise, ID**, a facelift, Mayor Kempthorne won 57% of the popular vote and became the first MICD alumnus to join the Senate. He replaces Steve Symms, who is retiring from office.

Mayor Susan Kirkpatrick (MICD: West 1991) has declared 1992 the "Year of the River" in **Fort Collins, CO**. The city hosted a workshop in July where community leaders made suggestions for a master plan for the Cache La Poudre River. The city is also working on a proposal to designate the river a national heritage area.

Mayor Kirkpatrick says "our community is deeply engaged in assuring the best possible future for the Poudre River."

Brownsville, TX, is preparing for development expected to accompany the North American Free Trade Agreement, which will stimulate economic growth along the Mexican border. **Mayor Pat Ahumada** (MICD: South 1991) plans to host a downtown workshop in January, 1993, to begin redefining the historic downtown core and consider development guidelines in an effort to protect the character of the old city center.

PHOTO CREDITS:
Page 1 - Mayor Richard Arrington, *Office of the Mayor*
Page 2 - Mayor Susan Weiner, *Bogul Photographic Creations*
Page 5 - Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, *City of Birmingham*

CALENDAR

November 28–December 2, 1992	National League of Cities, New Orleans, LA
January 17–19, 1993	U.S. Conference of Mayors, Washington, DC MICD Alumni Breakfast *(January 19)*
March 28–30, 1992	MICD XIV, University of Virginia Charlottesville, VA
April 15–17, 1993	MICD Northeast: M.I.T., Cambridge, MA

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